

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 10450 221354Z

43

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 A-01 SY-05 CPR-01 L-03 DODE-00

SS-15 NSC-05 WRD-01 SP-02 PA-01 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 NSCE-00 OPR-02 FS-01 ABF-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 INRE-00 /072 W

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O R 221330Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1023

INFO USOFFICE RFC PARIS

AMCONSUL ASMARA

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E, AF/EX

REF A. ADDIS ABABA 10436; B. ADDIS ABABA 10437

1. EMBASSY INFORMED THIS MORNING BY MOFA PROTOCOL CHIEF THAT SERVICE CHARGE DESCRIBED PARA 3 REFTEL (A) APPLIES TO ALL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ADDIS AND IS CONSIDERED BY EPMG AS A PURELY NON-DISCRIMINATORY SERVICE CHARGE. (SEE SEPTTEL FOR EMBASSY ASSESSMENT OF THIS POSITION.) THIS ISSUE WAS RAISED YESTERDAY AT SAME MEETING CONCERNING POUCH INSPECTION (REF B) WITH INITIAL REACTION BY THOSE PRESENT THAT THE CHARGE SEEMED TO BE A TAX AND THEREFORE PROHIBITED

UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND/OR CUSTOMARY DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS MAY PROTEST THIS ACTION ON GROUNDS THAT IT APPEARS

TO BE A TAX IF RPT IF HE CAN GET SUFFICIENT BACKING FROM OTHER MEMBERS,

AN EVENT WE ARE NOT SURE WILL TAKE PLACE, BUT POSSIBLE. WILL ADVISE. PROTEST, IF MADE, WOULD IN ANY CASE TAKE TIME, AND MAY VERY WELL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL GIVEN POSITION ALREADY TAKEN BY EPMG.

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 10450 221354Z

2. PRACTICAL EFFECT UPON EMBASSY WILL BE LOSS OF ETH\$2432 ON \$30,400

IN LARGE BILLS NOW ON HAND, OR MORE, DEPENDING ON HOW FAR WE GO IN ACCOMMODATING CURRENCY REQUIREMENTS OFFICIAL USG EMPLOYEES AND QUASI-OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS WHO HOLD LARGE BILLS SUCH AS AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB, EMBASSY SNACK BAR, COMMISSARY ASSOCIATION, ETC. OUR SUPPLY OF SMALL BILLS NOW ON HAND IS APPROX. ETH,\$6,000 (NO RFC CHECKS ON HAND, ALTHOUGH IN TRANSIT) WHICH WILL NOT LAST THROUGH TOMORROW IF WE ARE TO MAKE SALARY PAYMENT FOR USAID LOCAL EMPLOYEES, PAY BILLS AND CARRY ON ACCOMMODATION EXCHANGE.

3. ACTION REQUESTED:

(A) DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE ON WHETHER OR NOT WE JOIN IN OFFICIAL PROTEST, IF ONE MADE, OR UNILATERAL REACTION WE SHOULD MAKE IF NOT.

(B) DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE ON HOW FAR WE SHOULD GO IN ACCOMMODATING CURRENCY REQUIREMENTS DESCRIBED PARA 2 ABOVE.

(C) GUIDANCE ON WHETHER WE SHOULD CASH OUR LARGE BILLS AND TAKE LOSS OR SERIOUSLY CURTAIL ACCOMMODATING EXCHANGE AND OTHER PAYMENTS. ON THIS POINT, UNLESS DEPT. INSTRUCTS OTHERWISE AND PROVIDES US WITH ALTERNATIVE, WE PLAN ON GOING AHEAD AND EXCHANGING LARGE BILLS TOMORROW MORNING SEP. 23. WE WILL ATTEMPT RESERVE OUR POSITION ON TAX IF DEPT WISHES BY SECURING BANK RECEIPTS FOR CURRENCY EXCHANGED AND CHARGES INCURRED.
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